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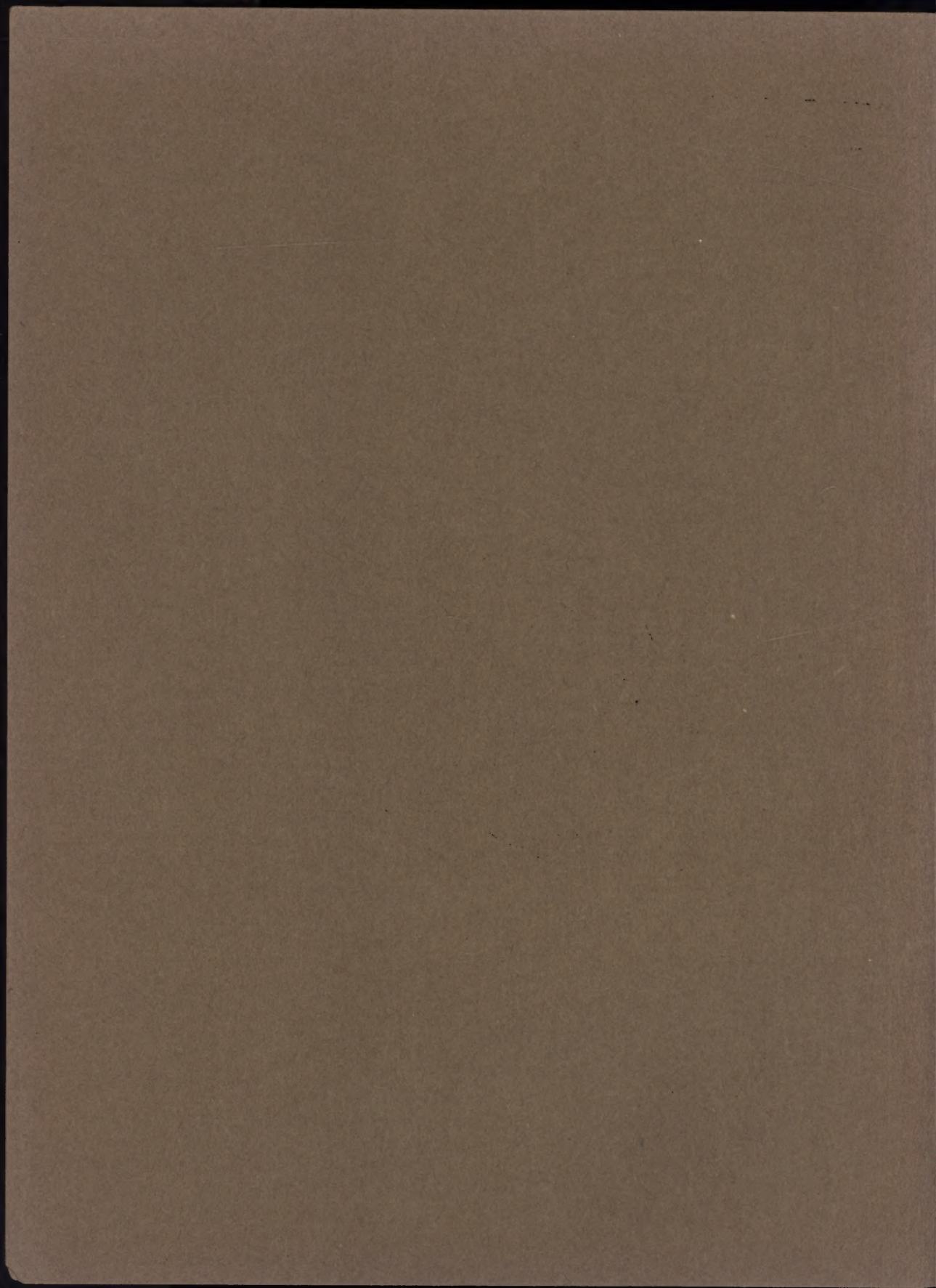
THE SCRIP

NOTES ON ART

JULY 1906



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THE SCRIP

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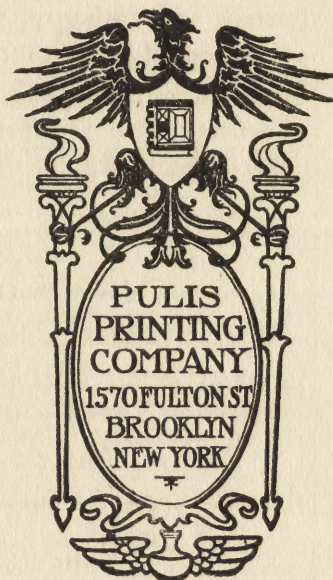
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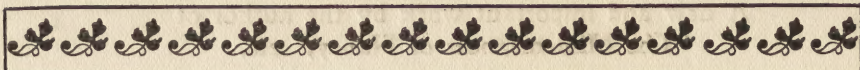
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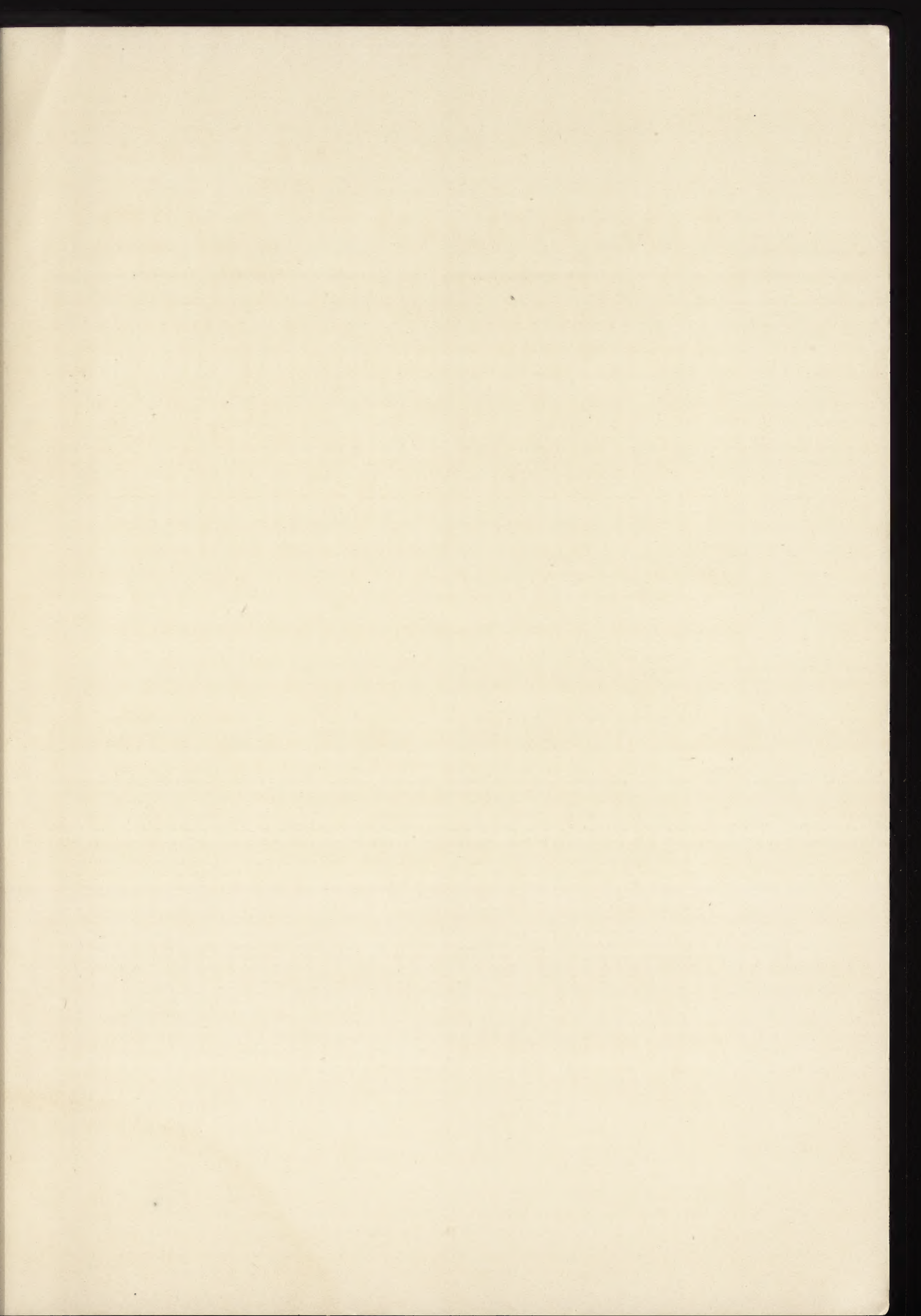
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"GRAVITATION"

Medallion by Caroline Peddle Ball

THE SCRIP

Conducted by ELISABETH LUTHER CARY

Vol. I

July, 1906

No. 10

The Museum Question

By William Rankin

THE opening of a *Salon Carré* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art seems to spell guidance as well as guardianship, and to commit the authorities to an experiment in aesthetic propagandism. While this experiment is perhaps the supplying of an unfelt want—may the appetite grow with the feeding!—an effective grouping and exhibition on a selective principle is, of course, a necessary art in itself, unless our museums are designed to aid only experts or scientists. That this policy may become a permanent one in principle—the value of the present qualitative selection is another question—may be urged as especially desirable in view of the announcement that great attention is to be given to a representation of industrial art and the useful crafts in future acquisitions.

No stream rises higher than its source. The inspiration and influence of one masterpiece is worth more in the end, even for practical art education, than the completest aggregation of minor and secondary exhibits. We are in far great-

er danger in America of making a god of the "Holy Average" in art, as in everything else, than of any vital erring in our museum authorities when they attempt to lead rather than follow the public taste. The instance of the South Kensington museum in its want of an anthological and I make bold to say a dogmatical aim to guide the inexpert and the undisciplined is, considering the wealth of that collection in material, the most striking among many grand refusals of such opportunity in Europe. South Kensington is no example for New York to follow, because New York is not yet a wise guide to itself in matters of art and needs a museological master. In the art *Podestà* from Great Britain, the Metropolitan trustees have found a man who is willing, with his curator's help, to select and emphasize and actively present the aesthetic claim of the numerous fine pictures in the Museum in contrast with the abundant rubbish there. But the duty of the Metropolitan trustees and their able directorate is not adequately performed, in view of the richness of the art treasure under their charge, if the problem of a purely popular and aesthetic function for the Museum be not resolutely grasped as demanding a still more radical and practical solution. Art escapes the catalogue. Every expedient of organically logical rather than arbitrarily scientific or technical arrangement must eventually be adopted in order to give air and freedom to the spirit of the work and present as far as possible an emotional affinity that transcends even the epochal and local environment.

Purely historical considerations must yield to a distinctly aesthetic programme of exhibition in the end, or our public museums will be replaced by the taste and intelligence of private initiative. Reproductions when not subordinated to original works with an accessory and decorative purpose,

must form a distinct historical department by themselves. The process of elimination or withdrawal must be far more ruthless; the acceptance of gifts must never be allowed to break the harmony of an ordered whole; the labels and catalogues must be interpretative as well as scientifically accurate; the library facilities must include exhaustive reproductions and an educated staff; the whole aim of the museum, in a word, should be to recognise in actual administration that art is no mere *corpus vile* for archaeological investigation only, but a living presence for the uplifting and refining of the community.

The difficulties in the way of making the Metropolitan Museum the true focus of art education in America, as it should be, are enormous. Criticism of the trustees or the directorate on matters of detail will be useful if intelligent; but the chief need of the time is not criticism, but a loyal and enthusiastic support of every effort which is being made to give to our museums of art more authority and influence as centres of aesthetic as well as historical culture. Such an effort as this present exhibition of a selective gallery of great paintings in New York is an important event in our intellectual life. The admission to honourable prominence of examples of the more "primitive" schools of European painting will be a useful stimulus to many of us who have never seen anything in art but a literal translation of external nature and average life, and will open up to many even travelled Americans fields of emotional experience which for want of a preliminary education have been as if they were not.

The Work of Caroline Peddle Ball

AT the exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts last winter, in the sculpture room, was to be seen a very small figurine representing a child clasping in its arms a picture-book, its face broadly smiling, its sandalled feet stoutly planted, its large head childishly erect on the small throat, its entire pose vigorously suggestive of freshness of inspiration. Technically the work had a singular attractiveness. It combined delicacy of modelling with boldness of form. The hand had known just where to insist upon the anatomical structure for the affect of robustness in the sturdy little figure, and just where to caress the surface into delicate suggestions of light and shadow. The hair lying thick and rough on the head was not permitted to conceal the fine shape of the latter; the dimpled cheeks and dimpled arms, the babyish chin curving softly in beautiful modulation to the little neck, the plump, outspread hands, had, with all their suggestions of tenderness and childhood, not a trace of the sentimental smoothness by which tenderness and childhood commonly are rendered. The touch was firm and clear and the individual character was shown through the soft forms with penetrating imagination. It was altogether a performance of extraordinary distinction, in which the sculptor, Caroline Peddle Ball, displayed all the qualities of her exceedingly personal and interesting art.

Although Mrs. Ball has exhibited for a number of years, she has produced comparatively little, and each example of her work has had a special character and charm. She studied art at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women and at the Pennsylvania Academy, and later at the Art Students'



CHILD WITH PICTURE BOOK
Figurine by Caroline Peddle Ball



League of New York, where she came under the influence of Mr. St. Gaudens and responded with ardour to its stimulus. To Mr. Kenyon Cox she also acknowledges her debt for the knowledge she possesses of the human figure. Her first commission was for a figure of the *Young Virgin* for the Tiffany Glass Company. This was exhibited at the Society of American Artists and at the Columbian Exposition. It is executed somewhat in the spirit of the Primitives, a little feebly, but with delicacy of line and subtlety of expression. A winter spent soon after in Florence studying the works of the masters of the Renaissance, and three subsequent years in Paris, brought into her later work a greater self-possession and freedom. At the tenth annual exhibition of the Architectural League of New York she had a bronze figure intended for an andiron, a young laughing boy, his head thrown back in an ecstasy of mirth and his arms stretched out in front of him with the palms of the hands spread wide to the heat of the fire. The remarkable gayety and crispness of modelling in this wonderful little object can hardly be over-estimated.

Within the last few years Mrs. Ball has worked chiefly in low relief, taking her subjects from the life of children. In these she frequently uses a few lines of verse inscribed on the background of her panel for a text, and makes her study of the psychology of childhood as well as of its external features. Her children are reflective, puzzled, interrogative of the laws of nature. They belong to the type that dreams and imagines, not to the type of the lustily indifferent. Her child with a candle looks into the flame for an answer to its questioning—

When nurse has puffed you to a spark
The room grows full of thick soft dark;
I know you stand there all the night—
At least your body long and white;
But, then, where goes when made to stop
That little brightness at the top?

The little faces are quaint and sincere, full of sweetness and without guile or sophistry. The modelling is controlled and not too realistic. It has, however, the qualities of vigour and richness rather than the qualities of vagueness and suggestiveness. The head is apt to project much more than the rest of the body, and the shadows fall with a considerable depth of tone. If we were speaking of a drawing in black and white, we no doubt should call attention to the chiaroscuro and the ample expressive outline rather than to the generalisation and abstraction of the forms. It is a very vital and healthful art, without the ænemic taint of much that is modern, yet with modern sensitiveness to details of mental physiognomy. Within its narrow limits, it has something to say that has not been said before, and we may hope, if not for a greater loquaciousness, at least for a fuller expressiveness in the future.

C.

French Influences in Whistler's Art

By Elisabeth Luther Cary

WHISTLER, going as an art-student to Paris in 1855, found himself at once in precisely the environment that suited his temperament, his education and his intellectual tastes. It was a matter of the first importance that, during some years of boyhood spent in Russia, he had learned to speak the French language as though it were his own. This saved him the tedious effort of translating into a new vocabulary the thoughts and feelings of those about him. It gave him practically another tool which he understood as he understood his etching needle; it made it easy for him to enter



Photographed by P. L. G.

MEDALLION by Caroline Peddle Ball
By courtesy of Miss Mary Gould Luther



directly upon the life of a French student without any preliminary knocking at the door and fumbling with the latch.

And the student life of that period was marked by characteristics that fitted his tendency of mind as the glove fits the hand. M. Duret has described the fondness of the young Parisian painters for singularizing themselves by strange costumes and especially by railing and mocking at the philistine world outside their walls, habits since renounced in favour of a conventional aspect and bearing. "This custom of an exclusive pose, these distinctive features of the French artist, in combination with the manner of an American gentleman and a man, moreover, full of spirit, wit and originality, must needs make him exceptional, one who could not fail to be anywhere immediately remarked," adds the critic.

Whistler had read his Murger and was prepared for the liveliness of the little art circle, which we very well may believe he found to his liking; perhaps none the less that his pocket-book, if not a Fortunatus purse, was reasonably well-filled, so that he could drink the light wine of Bohemianism without getting the taste of the lees.

But it should always be remembered of him that if he liked gayety he liked work as well. He had indeed a veritable passion for work in such forms as the genuine artist chooses. He is said not to have been an industrious student at Gleyre's, where he seems to have taken after the practical fashion of Americans only what he needed to add to his technique, without accumulating any particularities of method which later must be discarded. He worked, however, with a moderate assiduity at the Louvre as was the commendable practice of art students at that time before the "old masters" were discredited as guides to new mastery. His copy of the *Angélique* of Ingres, recently seen at the Keppel Galleries in New

York, is a sufficiently veracious performance, but he did not excel his companions in these more or less mechanical tasks.

The point with him was not so much his industry in the ordinary sense of the word, but his energy of purpose. He himself declared that what he began he did not leave, and having begun to be an artist he never for a moment was anything else. If he were not working in the studio or in the gallery, he would be working in the street, observing, making comparisons and deductions, training his eyes, storing his memory, and by the constant taking of notes giving to his hand that necessary manual memory without which an artist is at loss to record his knowledge. Nothing was too near him or too commonly seen to be overlooked as material for art; and, as we have seen in his etchings, he was early on the watch for the significant in what he saw, for that illuminating moment in which the essence of a face or a scene is revealed to the onlooker.

Concentration might have been his watchword save that he could not have been persuaded to accept one so commonplace. Concentration, at all events, was his continual aim, and, ardently sought in his earlier years, led naturally to that stately synthesis by which his later work is marked. M. Duret tells the story of the little portrait of Stephen Mallarmé which served as a frontispiece to the volume of Mallarmé's verse and prose, published in 1893. To those who knew him, says M. Duret, the sketch, a lithograph, was an astonishing likeness, and possessed the special charm of improvisation as though the artist had suddenly seized in its flight the most expressive moment possible. As a matter of fact, however, Mallarmé had posed so long and so often as to be at the point of despair when the happy conclusion at last was reached. Whistler had drawn rapidly according to his theory of light

swift workmanship, but the results seemed to him one after the other to lack that intimate penetration of his model's personality which he desired, and the work was torn up for a new beginning. At last the final improvisation appeared, as free from signs of labour as the others, but holding in its casual lines all the observation accumulated during the earlier attempts.

This is the history in little of Whistler's art, but success along these lines presupposes not only perseverance, but the utmost familiarity with the use of the medium involved. Before Whistler could paint in his characteristic fluent manner, with his beautiful easy stroke and his fine lacquered surfaces, he had to learn the management of pigments and to conquer the rebellious brush.

His friendship with Fantin-Latour is assumed by M. Léonce Bénédict, his most enlightened interpreter, to have been of the greatest importance and value to him in his efforts to acquire a mastery of the craft of painting. Certainly he could hardly have had a safer guide or a wiser counsellor. Fantin was one of those in whom as in books, in the good Bishop of Durham's phrase, "we find the dead as it were living." His youth was spent almost exclusively in disengaging from the pictures of the past the spirit and method of those who painted them. "Rubens and Veronese discovered him to himself," says one of his critics, and his long patient apprenticeship to this humble labour of the copyist, undertaken as it was in the mood not of literalism but of poetic analysis, resulted in a facility and a felicity of handling quite wonderful to behold. As true to himself as to his great models he developed his style while searching for the secret of theirs.

At the time when Whistler "a young man eccentric enough in bearing, with an alert head adorned by handsome long

curly hair and covered by a large flat hat," encamped behind his easel in the Louvre and expressed with ardour his admiration for the canvas upon it, Fantin had begun to paint those episodes of family life in which his distinguished composition and his unlaboured execution are seen to such admirable advantage. It is easy to believe that Whistler derived from the sobriety and measure, the good taste and intelligence of such works a degree of profit not to be estimated lightly. Some of his early pictures—his portrait of *La Mère Gérard* with its careful commonplace drawing; his portrait of himself painted in frank imitation of Rembrandt's *Head of a Young Man* in the Louvre, with dashing brush-work and strong contrasts of light and shade—show that he could have gone his way telling rather obvious truths in a striking manner with much success. But though he was clever enough to imitate with facility he had no love for such cleverness and no desire to develop it. What he gained from Fantin was a clear light by which he found his way to his individual form of expression. We see his personal method incomplete but unquestionable in his first important composition, *At the Piano*. This picture was finished for the *Salon* of 1859, and in its beauty of tone and arrangement, in the suavity of its line and the delicacy of its modelling, it reveals not only the salutary influence of his friend but also the vision that later was to achieve the portrait of the artist's mother and the *Miss Alexander*. M. Bénédict has described it, chiefly with reference to the debt it owes to Fantin, as follows:

"In a softly lighted interior a woman, seated at the left of the canvas, is playing on the piano; at the right stands a little girl, leaning on the piano and listening in an attentive attitude. These are his [Whistler's] sister, Mrs. (now Lady) Haden and his niece Annie, already made the subject of a





"AT THE PIANO"
By J. McNeill Whistler

delicious etching. The mother is wholly in profile, in a black dress; the little girl is all in white with blond hair falling on her shoulders. Under the piano, violin and violincello cases repeat the black note of the dress. On the floor is a covering of plain red which responds to the red covering of a round table behind Mrs. Haden, on which is placed a Chinese cup decorated in blue and gold. The background, very light and soft, is of greyish-white with bands of water-green and gold; the wall is adorned, as always in Fantin's pictures, by the lower portions of two great picture frames, the gold of which gleams dimly. The just agreement of these sober discriminated tones, these reds and russets, these blacks and whites, these greys and golds; the relation of the figures to the background from which they detach themselves quietly, bathed in atmosphere; the flesh-tones suffused with a limpid brilliancy as though softened by the glow of the light; the transparency of the shadows; the caressing vibration of the lights; the whole precious canvas, of the rarest sensibility, evokes the memory of those *Brodeuses* and of that *Liseuse* with which it went to the combat in that *Salon* of 1859, the first to which the two friends had dared adventure."

The two friends were both defeated, owing to the simple fact that all attempts in art which fell outside of academic principles and customs were rejected as a matter of rule. It was on this occasion that Bonvin, a painter some fifteen or twenty years the senior of Whistler and his companions, threw open his studio for an exhibition of their works and brought to this little "*Salon des Refusés*" Courbet and other contemporary artists who marked Whistler for their particular praise.

Courbet at this time was forty years old and on the crest of that wave of realism which was to sweep over romanticism,

and although Fantin, a hero-worshipper at heart, affectionate and loyal and dedicated, almost in despite of his originality, to the glorification of others, rendered homage to Delacroix, Whistler escaped by way of Courbet from that threatened influence. Courbet was the model for Manet's robust modernity much more than for Whistler's musical notations of colour and tone, but he played his part, nevertheless, in the development of Whistler's style, more particularly in the landscapes where traces may be seen of his uncompromising renderings of natural forms. *The Blue Wave*, painted at Biarritz in 1862 in Courbet's company, is a composition of boiling surf and rolling waves, of cumulous cloud and brown rocks, such as Whistler's undirected vision would hardly have chosen. *The Coast of Brittany*, painted the year before is a similar study of bold rocks and blue sea. "It is absolutely Courbet's habitual point of view," says M. Bénédite, "it is the same way of looking at the scene, of placing it on the canvas, it is the same palette, the same coloration. How could Whistler have entertained the illusion that he owed nothing to Courbet?"

It was, perhaps, a part of Whistler's Americanism not to over-emphasize his debt to the past, a point at which the French with their quick and generous acknowledgment, it must be admitted, are superior to us. But Whistler does not seem to me to have been altogether unjustified in declining to accept Courbet's influence as a determining factor in his career as an artist. What he took from him he promptly relinquished. The very pictures which have certain qualities of arrangement and even of colour in common with those of the rugged Frenchman have also qualities which foreshadow Whistler's own entirely different way of looking at nature. The *Trouville* now in the possession of Mrs. John L. Gard-

ner, is far more Whistler than Courbet although it was painted under the latter's wing.

Moreover, Whistler was not a dull painter, not at all the kind to follow any lead unless his own mind had a controlling part in the game. Neither Courbet nor Fantin led him away from his own predilection. Courbet was the advocate of nature and realism, yet never so much content with the visible truth as Whistler himself. And when the latter began to add to his pictures of the outdoor world the subtler truths of atmosphere and light as he learned them, he did not discard the more obvious truths upon which his youthful eye had rested. His ocean has always the suggestion of a ponderable element strong in mass and power. This we may say if we choose is owing to Courbet's influence, but as his earliest etchings show the same searching study of obvious facts on which later was to be founded his study of elusive beauty, we hardly can hold any forerunner or contemporary largely responsible for his logical and normal course of development.

We find it strange, in fact, that in spite of his unwillingness to admit that Courbet influenced his art, he so deeply resented the negative influence which he exercised by his protest against classicism. He over-estimated the importance of his deficient schooling not realizing that his was not the plodding intelligence to reach its goal by school methods, no matter what master might be over him.

From his letters to Fantin we gain a quite minute knowledge of his attitude of mind toward his work. To this one friend, at least, he shows himself expansive and appealing, without pride or prejudice or the arrogance that marks his public utterances. By the summer of 1867 he is far from flattering to the environment that pleased him so much in the days of his youth. At a moment of complete disheartenment he writes:

"Ah! my dear Fantin, what an education I have given myself! Or, rather, what a terrible lack of education I feel! With the fine qualities bestowed upon me by nature, what a painter I might be now, had I not, vain and content with these qualities, scorned everything else!" It is in this letter that he assures his friend of the regret, rage, and hatred with which he thinks of Courbet, not of the poor man himself or even of his works, but of his realistic doctrines, and that "horrible cry *Vive la Nature*" which he declares was prompted by the assurance of ignorance in mockery of all tradition.

"That cry of 'Nature,' my dear fellow, has been my great misfortune," he goes on. "Where could an apostle have been found readier to accept that theory, so convenient and so calming to all uneasiness? What! one need only open his eyes and paint what he sees before him, this beautiful Nature and all her retinue! That's all! Very well, we shall see! And we have seen!—the *Piano*, the *White Girl*, the *Thames* pictures, the views of the sea—canvasses produced by a black-guard swelling with vanity at being able to show the painters his splendid gifts, qualities only requiring a severe training to make their possessor at the present moment a master and not a perverted pupil. Ah, my friend, our little band has indeed been a vicious society!" He continues still further to deplore his choice and mourns that he could not have had Ingres for a teacher, while liking his pictures only moderately. "I find many of his canvasses, which we have looked at together, very questionable in style," he says, "not at all Greek as they are said to be, but very viciously French. I feel that there is a much greater distance to go, that there are much more beautiful things to do. But I repeat, had I but been his pupil! What a master he would have been! How sanely he would have guided us!"

M. Bénédict quotes this letter as marking the point of Whistler's departure from all tentative and investigating efforts toward his exclusively personal manner. It marks unquestionably his revulsion against Courbet, which was, perhaps, natural at the moment when his whole mind was absorbed in the rendering of light and air and the justness of values so little considered by Courbet in his realisations of "the mighty ocean and the solid land," but why at this moment he should have yearned for the guidance of Ingres is not so clear unless in his researches into the problems of light he felt his not yet wholly effective knowledge of form and perception of outline giving way. We may consider it fortunate that Ingres did not lay upon him the detaining hand of classicism. Had this happened, we can hardly imagine him as again so free to seek the expression of form in his own way, with silvery floating lights and quivering shadows that define without insistence, that model without intrusion. Nor can we altogether deplore the lack of academic education which might have resulted in a more exact if less exacting system of drawing, since such might have curbed the energetic and intelligent self-education that went on steadily refining his vision and keeping his mind critical of his processes and accomplishment.

Whatever seemed to him to endanger the integrity of this ideal was a matter of concern to him. French influences as he gained mastery over his medium, sank more or less into the background with him, although he remained quite loyal to his friendships in that country of picturesque devotions. The French quickness of apprehension, freedom from sentimentality, readiness to take lightly the phrase or act of the moment without attaching to it a prodigious and solemn importance, must always have been balm to a spirit easily fired to voluble



DROUET. From an etching by Whistler

rage. And the sharply scientific methods of the circle of artists within which he received his initiation were the best possible to counteract whatever tendency to slovenliness he may have had in his temperament. That there was some such tendency, marvellously as it was concealed, is shown by his avoidance of certain problems of drawing which a more thorough person—Degas, for example even without the influence of Ingres—would have welcomed as putting to the test the value of his technical equipment. He never drew feet very well, as witness the portrait of Miss Connie Gilchrist, that of Miss Alexander, and that of the Count Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac, though it is not possible to believe that he could not have conquered that particular anatomical construction. No detail, however, was interesting to him except as a contribution to the whole impression—hence his superiority. He had a supreme faculty for seeing things whole and not in separated parts, and by this faculty alone can he be called an impressionist. It is the impressionism that is common to all the really great artists of the world.

He took away from France what perhaps he brought to it—a great respect for reality, which, of course, is a different matter from realism. He had joined in the cry for nature only to turn upon himself, as we have seen, in anger at his unwisdom, but he fed his art with nature to the end, penetrating appearances to what is at least the artistic reality, the spirit of a scene by which all its objects are held in unity. He found himself at home with the more superficial realists only until he had developed his vision for that curious inner truth of things which cannot express itself through any method or any performance unless the artist is also a poet. And a poet Whistler absolutely was, despite his staccato utterances and keen wit. When the memory of these has van-

ished away the poetry of his work will live still, and it is none the less poetry—it is greatly the more poetry—that it is expressed with extraordinary science. It is not too much to grant to his French friends, certainly, to own that their influence was all in the direction of steadying, ordering and developing his talent. If he resented Courbet what would have happened had he chanced to begin his career as a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood! After eight years in Paris, with many journeys thence, to be sure, but with the Paris standards continually before him and with the clear acute criticism of the informed French mind always at his service, he was at least protected, notwithstanding his own avowal to the contrary, from thinking himself wonderful before he *was* wonderful. His early mood was one of discouragement and effort, lifting only as he saw himself approaching the desired goal. "Always the same story," he complained to Fantin, "always such painful and uncertain labour! I am so slow!"

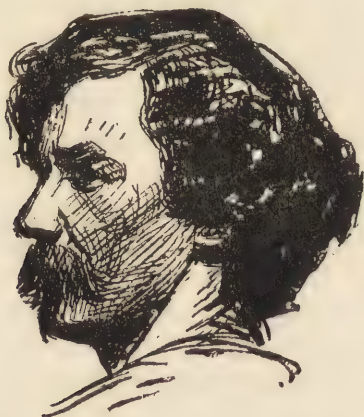
This slow and painful labour produced, however, at a very early date, results that would have seemed most satisfactory to a painter of lower aim. *The Music Room*, which followed the piano picture, and, like that, was painted during one of his trips to London, where his sister, Mrs. Haden, lived, has certain qualities of maturity in both conception and handling that hardly have been surpassed even by its author. He never, for example, imagined an arabesque more beautiful than that of the standing figure, the curves of which flow naturally, without exaggeration, and in perfect harmony, balanced and offset by the straight lines of the curtains, the picture-frames and the mirror-shelf. The young "Amazon," as Whistler called her, gathering her long skirts into heavy folds, holding her whip and glove lightly in her small hand, and smiling a

little as she looks intently toward some scene or object out of the canvas, entirely absorbs the attention. Her youth and suppleness and strength, the rich silhouette of her gown against the light background, her easy poise carrying the suggestion, not too strongly insisted upon, of arrested motion, place her among the most enticing visions we have of English girlhood. As the creation of an individuality we think of her as in the same category with Rose Jocelyn and Diana Warwick. The whole group in its pleasant environment has a kind of frank loveliness rare enough in any art, and in Whistler's increasingly rare. The spirit of the subject, not merely its external aspect, has been grasped so completely that we are greatly fortunate in having a subject of intrinsic charm. The little girl, delightful Annie Haden again, dainty and fresh in her crisp white frock, dreams over her book without a trace of self-consciousness in attitude or expression. The woman's face seen in the mirror is delicate and tender, that of the Amazon is of peculiar beauty and sweetness, and the flowered chintzes, the reading lamp, the elegant homeliness of the softly lighted interior, add to the effect of a painting affectionately wrought with a sense of the psychological value of the scene mingling with that care for ingenious composition and exquisite harmonies already apparent as dominating characteristics of Whistler's painting.

It is a temptation to linger over this picture, to class it with the portrait of Whistler's mother as an expression of something so sweet and fine in the painter's perception of life that it cannot be put with his other pictures, but remains a perpetual benediction and perfect of its kind. How purely English it is! Yet do we find such distinction, such reticence, such absence of even a breath of sentimentality, in any English picture of the time—or, for that matter, of any time?

It is England touched by French reasonableness and American sentiment. It is England at once spiritualized and rendered scientifically. Never had her simplicity and unassumingness and pleasant humanity been shown with more impeccable taste, more severity of execution. Subjectively and objectively lovely, *The Music Room* is a priceless record of that fleeting instant in Whistler's career when, in sympathy with his friend Fantin, he painted domestic scenes.

And for direct souvenirs of his French environment we have many a charming etching and more than one crisp sketch: the *Soupe à Trois Sous*, *Finette*; *Fumette*; Fantin working in bed on a cold day; the printer Delâtre; Bibi Lalouette, and the sculptor, Drouet, whose fine portrait (which we reproduce on page 322) was etched, M. Duret says, in two sittings with five hours of pose.



PEN AND INK SKETCH OF WHISTLER

By Fantin-Latour. From the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*

The Galleries

THE ETCHINGS AT THE WATER-COLOUR SOCIETY'S EXHIBITION

THE central gallery of the Fine Arts Building in New York during the recent exhibition of the American Water Colour Society presented a very attractive and serene appearance. The etchings, hung in groups of the work of one artist, were sufficiently varied to avoid the general effect of monotony and sufficiently good to enlist the interest of all intelligent lovers of prints. So far from being overwhelmed by the stronger tones of the water-colours in the adjacent rooms, they gained a certain distinction by their almost uniform dedication to the proprieties of their medium. It was inevitable that reminiscences of Whistler should float before the vision bent upon delicate doorways, quaint streets, court-yards, palaces and Venetian canals. It is, however, no discredit to the most accomplished etcher to follow where Whistler led, and there are many examples in the present exhibition of an outlook as personal as his and wholly different from it. Mr. Cadwallader Washburn's *Devout Disciple of Buddha*, for example, is an acute study of a baffling physiognomy, without any echo of illustrious predecessors beyond a certain elegance in the line made by the tool that may be found wherever a worker has been dedicated to the delicate and the precise. All of Mr. Washburn's subjects are printed in a beautiful tone that rests as lightly as sunshine on the paper and has the same effect of diffused warmth and glow.

Mr. MacLaughlin in *The Coppersmith*, the *Sleeping Rag Gatherer* and *Pavia* is more vigorous in line, not quite so

careful to fill his spaces, and rather more ample and authoritative in style. Among the portraits of places the numerous views of New York by Mr. Mielatz and of New York and Philadelphia by Mr. White afford sufficient proof that pictorial material lies about us in almost any environment, and with an interpreter careful of composition, alert for the notation of fleeting impressions, and learned in the use of his medium, may become as absolutely beautiful as any subject brought from afar. Indeed *Cherry Street*, and *Restaurant, Mott Street*, by Mr. Mielatz, are almost as satisfying to our acquired love of the picturesque as the sketches of old Spanish and Italian cities which are hardly less foreign. Mr. Pennell's predilection for streets and houses of special association and his curious trembling line are too well-known to call for more than inclusion among the work that makes this particular exhibition charming; but a new and welcome note is struck by Mr. John Sloan in his interpretations of the human various. His *Fifth Avenue Critics*, *The Man Monkey*, *The Show Case* and *Fun One Cent* are glimpses of a side of life in our city streets infinitely appealing to both our sense of fun and our sense of pity. His rich flexible and expressive line omits no pictorial suggestion and conveys the sense of the crowded hour and the crowded place with subtlety and vitality. Among the other exhibitors, all of whom are noteworthy for workmanlike effects, Mr. Otto J. Schneider and Mr. Harry H. Aronson turn their attention to the portraiture of persons rather than of places, a field in which etching is a medium less sympathetic than lithography, unless the treatment is highly synthetic as in the *Mother and Child* by Anne Goldthwaite, a rendering as forcible as it is delicate of a subject merciless in the opportunities it offers for sentimentality of conception and handling.

Arts and Crafts Department

Edited by Annie M. Jones

THE HALL MARKS OF FINE BINDING

IF, as an uninstructed book-lover, you enter a shop where volumes in fine bindings are on exhibition, what do you see? Since you are not a collector with wisdom gained patiently and at great price through the examination of books, nor yet a student acquainted with all the details of forwarding, the chances are that you will be confused and wearied by the time you have conscientiously looked at all the specimens in the exhibition, and not much the wiser for learning that one is a specimen of modern French work, another an old Venetian binding and still another an atrocious example of Miss So-and-So's craftsmanship. The spark that kindles interest is knowledge, and until a binding illustrates for you some point in forwarding or finishing you will gaze with eyes that see not.

Let us therefore examine (with ungloved hands) one of the volumes in the exhibition case to note its characteristics. The cover is fresh and new, but the date on the lowest panel of the back proclaims the book an old one, evidently rebound. It is a tedious task to prepare an old book for rebinding, but here the process has been carried out in a workmanlike manner. Mending the holes in the leaves has been done as sparingly as was consistent with strength: too generous patching means a bulky back when the leaves are sewn together.

The binder, on account of the book's antiquity, could not

readily match the colour of the sheets when adding extra end-papers, but he has succeeded in getting a paper harmonious in tone and texture. These added blank pages give the volume a luxurious appearance. A book that lacks them has the skimmed shop-made look of a ready-to-wear garment where material must be economised to meet bargain prices.

Now, note how flexibly this volume opens and lies flat. You may fold it back as easily as a paper-covered novel and it will show no strain, for the sewing has been easy, however strong, around the fine cords forming the bands. Flexible sewing around cords is a survival of early methods of binding and though it is slow it is absolutely secure. The remarkable flexibility of this particular volume stamps it as probably the work of an English craftsman. In many celebrated binderies a quicker method of sewing is preferred with stiffer backs as a result. And although our volume lies wide open, it will shut together firmly and be no bulkier at the back than at the fore-edge, so closely do the sections lie against one another. And the book is as uniform in its easy rounded shape as though formed by a mould instead of by innumerable taps of the backing hammer. Some of the books in the case have backs as flat as a board, a style favoured by some of the best English binders, imitated in machine-made books, and, if attempted by a beginner, apt to cave in dejectedly before the leather cover is fairly on. That little volume yonder, bound by an amateur with a talent for decoration but small skill in construction, not only gapes open but lies lop-sided, while the top panels are flatter than the lower ones—evidently the hammer worked at random, turning the sections crookedly instead of “fanning” them out regularly in opposite directions to the middle section. The successful backing of a book is a point in construction not to be over-

valued. The shape of the book and the set of the cover depend thereon, and no amount of upholstery or gilding will atone for a crooked frame. "As the back is bent the book's inclined" would be a safe maxim for amateur binders.

This English book has its edges finished in rough gilt; that is, the sections were trimmed by hand *before* sewing. The object of gilding edges is to protect the leaves from soil, and the process commonly follows sewing, giving a hard, glittering surface. As the main characteristic of a book is its leaves, to thus conceal their presence is inartistic, and rough gilding beside revealing their existence, has the further advantage of permitting the binder to trim the merest shaving from the sheets, leaving his margins almost their original width, while cutting on the plow-and-press or guillotine after the sewing unavoidably trims deeper into the margin.

Another point of nicety is the head-band, which should be worked in silk on a strip of parchment and sewn down into the back of the book. Machine-made head-bands cheapen the look of the whole binding.

Of course, the most obvious point in a fine binding is the leather cover, the sumptuous garment that wraps this carefully wrought creature. The frame of a book may be hidden from the uninitiated, but anyone not blind or paralysed must enjoy the sight and feeling of a rich leather cover. The French get the pick of the best levant morocco and you may notice how deep, almost cushiony, their bindings look. They, and the English bindings as well, also look like *leather* and not like enamel, as some misguided persons prefer them to look, an effect obtained by over-crushing. Why, in Reason's name, pay seven dollars for a skin only deliberately to take every bit of life out of it? However lavish the true artist may be in ornament, whether of tooling or inlay, he

will understand the beauty of his material and keep its character unobscured. A visit to a leather-importing house will show you an astonishing variety of colours and shades. Who buys these vivid peacocks, pinks and saffrons, you cannot fathom if your taste has been formed by the artistic collections of private libraries and of the best book-sellers. Red is a durable colour and a brilliant background for tooling; green is charming in many shades, and a clear sapphire blue, brown, tan, and occasionally gray, are the colours commonly found in the best bindings. The softening effect of time is clearly seen in a collection of both old and new books, the dark gleam of the old making the new look almost crude and upstart in contrast.

Of more real importance than colour, though less obvious to the untechnical eye, is the texture, which, in leather of good quality, is thick, even, firm but flexible. Cheap leather is spongy, stretches incalculably, affords no depth for tooling and is vexatious to pare. A piece of good imported leather, even if one-eighth of an inch thick, is less discouraging to pare than a split or shaved piece of stretchy woolly goods, domestic in make and humorously called "levant"!

The putting on of the leather cover once properly pared to turn over the board covers, affords a chance for the neatest work. Compare the volume we have been examining with the piece of amateurish work lying near. The first has the leather not only smooth but tight and sharp on the edge of the boards; the bands across the back are clear-cut, fairly cleaving to the cord beneath; the little cap over the headband is uniform in finish and width with the edges of the boards; the leather on any flat surface, boards or back, shows no dragging or "skewing" of the grain; the margins inside are generous, affording space for decoration and signature,

and the corners are so neatly mitred that we have to search for the joint. The neighbouring volume, charmingly decorated, bears the marks of careless forwarding, and its brilliant tooling cannot conceal its slovenly bands, lumpy back, irregularly woven head-bands, and, worst of all, its squares so unevenly set that, if stood on end, the front cover would escape the ground.

The examples of French work on exhibition you will observe are so perfect in surface effect that they seem almost to have been formed in moulds instead of having grown by various stages under the hands of the binder; so perfect, indeed, that their construction being practically hidden, they are scarcely interesting to examine, although brilliant specimens of technique.

In decoration the watchword should be quality, not quantity. Technically speaking, perfection means uniform depth of tooling, clear lines showing no uncertain striking of the tools, a brilliant and uniform colour in the gold, and a general cleanness in finish. The faults of insufficient practice are crooked lines; blurred impressions resulting from efforts to patch previous unsuccessful ones; impressions too deep at the ends of forms, especially of curves, where pressure has come too heavily in one direction; burned or frosted places caused by too hot a tool; thin speckled impressions not completely gilded, due to uncertain striking or too cool a tool; uneven depth and colour and a general hesitancy and raggedness of effect.

Beginners should remember that an ambitious design indifferently executed will only accentuate feeble ability. Good taste and restraint in decoration mark the artist as surely as fertility of imagination; and he who has a due sense of proportion will keep in mind the fact that ornament

should adorn and not smother, and will not indulge in extravagant decoration for the mere gratification of his technical skill.

Elizabeth Goodwin Chapin.

At the recent exhibition of the *Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts*, following the admirable new custom of reserving certain rooms for the work of special artists, a gallery was devoted to Eugène Carrière, who died but a short time ago. Carrière was a painter who resolved matter as nearly as possible into spirit and evoked upon his canvasses visions of the most ethereal quality. M. Alexandre in the *Figaro* says :

"This great artist always worked in an ecstasy. Nature for him was not a model, but a point of departure. Hence the subtle, whirlwind quality of his painting which would have been weighed down by true colour and striking relief. His flights were unexpected to himself, and that is why his imitators, already become sufficiently numerous, borrowing from him nothing but a fashion of blurring and greying objects, give us only inconsistencies. They have but a formula while he caused something of his own nature to pass into the canvas. It is only necessary to have seen him at work to be assured of this. Tremendously attentive at first, at a certain moment, which he could not himself foresee, he let himself go in a rapture. It need not be said that if a method were to be made out of this it would be very dangerous, almost insane. Only those should permit themselves such transports who, like Carrière, possess profound knowledge; who, when they leave the earth and let all go, lose neither the vision nor the memory of reality." A number of Carrière's lithographs are on exhibition at the Lenox Library, New York City.

Book Reviews

(Whistler and Others. By Frederic Wedmore. London: Sir Isaac Pitnam & Sons, Limited.)

Mr. Frederic Wedmore, author of half a dozen imaginative works of literature, but better known as an art critic, especially through his "study and catalogue" of Whistler's etchings and his work on Fine Prints, has gathered together in this volume a set of twenty-four essays in little—if we may borrow Mr. Lang's expression—many of which we remember reading in the English reviews, in which most of them originally appeared.

Mr. Wedmore prefaces his volume with what he terms a Candid Word to the English Reader—a preface containing just a suggestion of the quality we are wont to look for in the incomparable forewords of Bernard Shaw, the "G. B. S." of former days. Declares Mr. Wedmore in these italicised lines that not only does the average English reader fail to care for art criticism, but he fears he does not even care for art itself. Excellent for our British art critic, whose fears will be fully borne out by consultation with any of his Gaelic neighbors.

Whistler's art has often been Mr. Wedmore's theme and the estimate of the artist's genius which he now gives us, "The Place of Whistler," may be taken as a final summing up of what he has already said. In vain we must look for the brilliant passages to be found in George Moore's essay—but then George Moore's essays in art criticism have never been approached—and, again, we must not look for the sober judgment and learning displayed in the remarks of D. S.

MacColl, painter, as well as critic. We have here the observations of a connoisseur of distinction, and what Mr. Wedmore has to say of Whistler forms an essay of more than usual merit.

This discriminating collector of prints also gives us an authoritative essay entitled "The Field of the Print Collector"—a paper in which he unavoidably reiterates much of what he said in his book entirely devoted to this subject. Also he gives us a brief appreciation of D. Y. Cameron, some of whose etchings I think will eventually take rank with the masterpieces of the craft, and numerous other essays of decided interest and value, although three or four of the briefer papers, which are only two or three pages in length, were much too fragmentary to have been included. Mr. Wedmore's remarks on the present fashionable art of the coloured mezzotint (he dismisses the subject with a few words) are particularly happy, and he is quite right in saying that these prints do not possess "one-tenth the character and art of a poster by Steinlen, a poster by Toulouse-Lautrec, or by that true master of severe design and worthy composition, Eugène Grasset."—A. E. G.

(Scraps from a Collector's Note Book. By Friedrich Hirth. New York: G. E. Stechert and Company. Price \$3.00 net.)

Professor Hirth in this learned little volume offers what he modestly calls a group of "desultory notes, dotted down by their author a dozen years ago for purposes of reference when forming a collection of scrolls and sketches in the old art city of Yangchou on the Grand Canal near Chinkiang." These notes contain much biographical information concerning Chinese painters of the present dynasty with appendices on some of the old masters and on art historians. They also

discuss numerous questions of technique and the subjects preferred by the various painters with regard to their symbolic and historic significance. Especially interesting is his comment (pp. 67-69) on the wood-cut assumed by Professor Giles of Cambridge University to be a portrait of Christ attended by two Nestorian priests.

The old masters of China are not more sacred from unprincipled copyists than those of later times and nearer races; Professor Hirth warns collectors that "the picture market abounds with false seals and signatures, and he who falls in love with a Chinese painting should do so for no other reason but because he really likes it; the artist's name and his seal are scarcely worth more than the dealer's label pasted on the outer end of the scroll, and certainly less than the trade-mark on a wine-bottle. Chinese law has no punishment in store for the forgers of such works of art and the only sympathy the native public will show with the victim is a laugh."

The art of China as represented by painters of the Ming and present dynasties has been underestimated, Professor Hirth thinks, by a public too exclusively appreciative of Japanese art. He says, moreover, that the utter indifference of the Chinese as to whether their art is appreciated by the foreigner, and their reluctance to part with the best examples, contributes to our neglect of modern efforts which is out of proportion to their merits and interest. The present volume should certainly serve to stir the interest of collectors in a field as yet comparatively free. The illustrations are twenty-one in number and while much of the charm of detail is lost, the general sense of the "envelope" of atmosphere to be found in the original paintings is better rendered by half-tones of moderate excellence than by the wretched and costly photo-gravures so often pressed into service to give an air of

specious magnificence to an illustrated volume. It is a pity, however, that an *edition de luxe* with fine collotype reproductions could not be made of this rare and beautiful pictorial material.

ART BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

- HOBSON, R. L., Porcelain, Oriental, Continental, and British.
(A Book on Hand Reference for Collection.) N. Y. E. P.
Dutton & Co. 1906.....\$3.50 net.
- NATIONAL GALLERY (THE), London: The Later British
School, New York, F. Warne & Co., 1906. (Art Galleries
of Europe). cl.....\$1.25 net.

PAPERS ON ART IN THE JUNE MAGAZINES.

APPLETON'S BOOKLOVERS

Recent Rural Decorations in Some State Capitols, Hamilton Bell.

COSMOPOLITAN

Trend of American Art, Leila Mechlin.

BOOK NEWS

Pre-Raphaelite Ideals, Anne M. Earle.

MUNSEY'S

Jean Léon Gérôme, R. H. Titherington.

CRITIC

Illustrations that do not illustrate.

Holman Hunt and Pre-Raphaelitism, E. L. Cary.

AMERICAN BOY

Bertel Thorvaldsen, Great Danish Sculptor, Helen Leah Read.

Notes

EXHIBITION AT THE ART STUDENTS' LEAGUE

THE annual exhibition of students' work held at the Art Students' League of New York last month showed enough variation in the treatment of the given model to prove that the pupils of none of the instructors were held slavishly to an imitative style. In the portrait class conducted by Mr. Loeb were the most individual attempts to escape from the conventions of a class-room and represent the model according to a personal vision. A canvas signed W. C. gave admirably the sharp dainty type of the subject, a dark girl with delicate features. By the use of thin paint the modelling was kept under control and the flesh tone was undisturbed by the strange vagaries of shadow and half-tone usually employed by the uninitiated to suggest features. The simple, vivacious little figure, neither blurred nor papery, but positively subtle of contour, was more than promising, it was an accomplished fact. Another quite different study of a girl with red hair and a warm-toned complexion was signed N., and was an excursion into the domain of the impressionist. It is much more difficult, of course, to manage thick paint than thin, and the success in this instance was notable for a student. The repetition of the colours of the hair and flesh in the background was cleverly managed, and if the form was not acutely observed—especially where an attempt was made to define the reflection on the line of the jaw with touches of pure colour—it was by no means so desperately lost as the heavy, dragged, plastered, tormented pigment would lead one to fear. There was moreover an impression given of life and movement not to be despised in a painter of long experience and wholly remarkable in student's work. The scholarship prize

in this class was won by Miss Agnes Richmond with a delightful little half-length figure, painted in the style of the older Dutch school, and showing either very profitable study of Museum resources or else a strong natural tendency toward a safe and winning manner of representation. Other canvasses were praiseworthy as efforts in the right direction, but hardly to be ranked in the same class with these three which were attempts not merely to realise nature but to realise art as well.

In the Woman's Life Classes under Mr. Cox, the black and white work showed much variety. In the drawing by Miss Hattie Faber, which won the scholarship prize, a strong feeling for construction was shown and a sense of the beauty inherent in the textures and forms of the human figure, although in elegance of proportion and in feeling for that generalisation of details inseparable from truly artistic representation the drawings by Miss Dorothea Walsh were much superior. The exhibit of the modelling classes was interesting and the figure by Miss Harriet Frismuth which won the Augustus St. Gaudens prize of seventy-five dollars, was a thoroughly serious piece of construction.

The work of the illustration class was the natural outcome of our present standard of illustration in this country, for the most part feeble and purposeless. The still-life work under Mr. Hawthorne naturally showed much technical skill, but oddly enough the children of the Saturday class in still-life seemed better to have grasped the idea of a single undisputed accent of colour on a polished surface.

We have no space to mention special examples of work not far above the average in exhibitions of this sort, but may note a general tendency toward a measure of distinction in the placing of the object on the canvas or paper.

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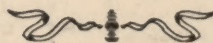
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